

NOTE ii CHILDREN OF LIVING PARENTS IN
RITUAL 245

be especially alive,¹ so the vital current might be
thought to flow
without interruption in the children of living parents
but to stagnate
in orphans. Hence the children of living parents
rather than orphans
would naturally be chosen to pour the living water
over the founda-
tions, and so to lend something of their own vitality or
endurance to
a building that was designed to last for ever.

On the same principle we can easily
understand why the Children
children of living parents should be especially chosen to
perform ^onivⁱⁿg
certain offices at marriage. The motive of such a choice
may be a employed
wish to ensure by sympathetic magic the life of the newly
wedded at marriage
pair and of their offspring. Thus at Roman marriages the
bride ceremonies
was escorted to her new home by three boys whose parents
were all l[^]aiy^{1"0602"}
living. Two of the boys held her, and the third carried a
torch of Albania,
buckthorn or hawthorn in front of her,² probably for the
purpose Bul^faria,
of averting the powers of evil; for buckthorn or
hawthorn was
credited with this magical virtue,³ At marriages in ancient
Athens
a boy whose parents were both living used to wear a
wreath of
thorns and acorns and to carry about a winnowing-fan full of
loaves,
crying, "I have escaped the bad, I have found the better."⁴
In
modern Greece on the Sunday before a marriage the
bridegroom
sends to the bride the wedding cake by the hands of a boy,
both of
whose parents must be living. The messenger takes great
care not
to stumble or to injure the cake, for to do either would be a
very
bad omen. He may not enter the bride's house till she
has taken
the cake from him. For this purpose he lays it down
on the
threshold of the door, and then both of them, the boy and
the
bride, rush at it and try to seize the greater part of the cake.
And
when cattle are being slaughtered for the marriage
festivities, the
first beast killed for the bride's house must be killed by a
youth
whose parents are both alive. Further, a son of living
parents must
solemnly fetch the water with which the bridegroom's
head is
ceremonially washed by women before marriage. And on
the day
after the marriage bride and bridegroom go in procession

to the
well or spring from which they are henceforth to fetch their
water.
The bride greets the spring, drinks of the water from the
hollow of
her hand, and throws money and food into it. Then
follows a
dance, accompanied by a song, round about the spring.
Lastly, a
lad whose parents are both living draws water from the
spring in
a special vessel and carries it to the house of the bridal pair
without
speaking a word: this "unspoken water," as it is called, is
regarded

¹ Flowing water in Hebrew is ⁴ Zenobius, *Proverb*, iii. 98;
Plut-
called "living water" (D«n D;D). arch, *Proverb*. I. 16;
Apostolius,

² Festus, *Deverborumsignificatione*, *Proverb*, viii. 16
(*Paroemiographi*
ed. C. O. Müller (Leipsic, 1839), pp. *Graeci*, ed. Leutsch et
Schneidewin, i.
244, 245, s.v. "Patrimi et matrimi 82, 323 sq. ii. 429)?
Eustathius, on
pueri." Homer, *Od.* xii. 357, p.

1726;
³ Ovid, *Fasti*, vi. 129 sq., 165-168. Photius, *Lexicon*, s.v. *gfpvyov*
KO.KQV.